

# Management Changes For Long-Term Sustainability Of Lake Winnipeg's Commercial & Recreational Fishery

Carly Deacon

*MWF Managing Director*

**O**ur group convened at the dock in Gimli, dressed in casual attire and overall, truly happy to spend the day out of the office.

Kevin Casper, Regional Fisheries Manager with the Department of Agriculture and Resource Development (ARD) danced around the boat sloping gear, nets and handing out slickers. This was not a normal research day for him gathering annual index data for the Department on Lake Winnipeg. This was a unique opportunity for the Wildlife and Fisheries Branch to explain the relevance of recent management changes to their Minister Blaine Pedersen, his staff, and to the Manitoba Wildlife Federation.

I would like to take a moment to reconvene on a file that MWF has classified as one of our advocacy priorities – the status of our Lake Winnipeg Fishery. Back in January 2020, MWF was eager to see all the stakeholders reconvene and work collaboratively on a management plan that protects

the resource, so our economy and resource users can continue to share the opportunities that the Lake Winnipeg Fishery provides. We brought together representatives from MLOA, WAAM, FAAM, Hooked Magazine, CWT and Fish Futures to gather support from the angling community and strengthen communication around the importance and value that this fishery brings to our lifestyles, the economy and all Manitobans. Every group around that table expressed a unanimous desire to work with all Lake Winnipeg stakeholders and committed to exploring any regulation changes brought forth by government that helps ensure a sustainable fishery. Well, Lake Winnipeg fishers, both commercial and recreational, can take a sigh of relief in knowing that the recent management changes will benefit the long-term sustainability of this incredible fishery. Here at the MWF office, we call these “wins”. In our books, these “wins” are due to the collaborative effort of passionate

organizations, businesses, commercial fishers, the Wildlife and Fisheries Branch and our Minister, who just so happens to see the value this fishery brings to Manitoban's lifestyles and livelihoods.

It was refreshing to see Minister Blaine Pedersen in his element. Prior meetings with the Minister were always formal, brief discussions at the Legislative Building. The moment Blaine, Kevin and I stepped on the boat, the atmosphere was relaxed, engaging and insanely informative. We left the dock that morning and ploughed across the lake to get some hands-on experience pulling nets and some quality time with Kevin. Kevin's vast knowledge of the fishery and science he has collected on the lake was rather impressive. Not to mention his ability to explain the science in a way that the Minister and I could understand. I knew right away that Kevin had a knack and the ability to relate to anyone – an extremely valuable asset on a Lake with so many stakeholders

